



YEARS
5 and 6

Timing

45 minutes

Materials

- Flipchart paper—one per group
- **Role Play Script** handout, cut into strips—one per pupil
- **Reflection handout** – one half sheet per pupil

Note: *There are facilitation options below if the pupils are in a virtual situation. Handouts can be provided electronically to be printed at home or as an editable Microsoft Word template to be submitted via email, learning management systems, or a live/shared document.*

Tools to Build Body Confidence

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE!

Overview

Content for the *Amazing Me* program was created in partnership with Dr. Marisol Perez, a clinical psychologist and researcher at Arizona State University and The Institute for Research and Education Advancing Children's Health (REACH). Dr. Perez has dedicated her career to assisting future generations be less focused on appearance and more focused on respecting, liking, and appreciating their bodies.

In this activity, pupils will investigate what percentage of their peer's conversations revolve around appearances before brainstorming conversation topics in which they can engage that are about topics other than body talk. Pupils will end by practicing and presenting ways to redirect a conversation through role playing.

Each activity is part of a five-lesson series that focuses on confronting comparisons and building body confidence. Lessons 1-3 include core content and should be completed in sequence. Lessons 4-5 are supplementary and provide pupils with an opportunity to extend their learning of core concepts.

Background

Body image is defined as the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors towards one's own body.¹ Research shows that body dissatisfaction contributes to the development of unhealthy behaviors in pupils and adults. People are more likely to do unhealthy things to control their weight and body shape when they focus more on appearance than body functionality.²

¹ Cash & Prunzinsky, 1990

² Thompson & Stice, 2001

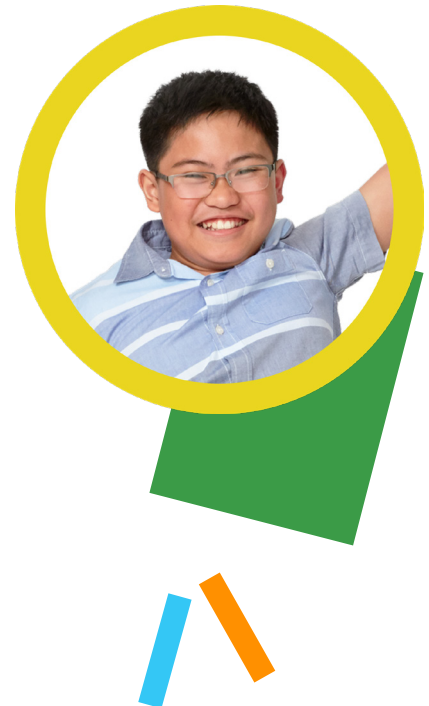
There are many factors that can cause body dissatisfaction in pupils. Some of these factors are media and celebrity body images, pressures from family and friends to look a certain way, and teasing and bullying from peers. Any talk about body or body type (even positive statements) can result in negative feelings about one's body.³

The concept of 'appearance ideals' is the idea that people are influenced by what society tells us is attractive and the use of these ideals to set goals for their own appearance. People from different cultures can have different appearance ideals. For example, in the United States and United Kingdom, the dominant appearance ideal is for girls to be unrealistically thin.⁴ Research shows that appearance ideals lead to unhealthy behaviours in pupils and adults. This means that when a girl consumes media (including television, magazines, and social media), she is likely to set unrealistic goals for her own body. This may cause her to dislike her own body, feel shame and guilt, and be more likely to engage in unhealthy behaviours. For boys and men, the appearance ideals are leanness and muscularity. When a boy consumes media, he is likely to set unrealistic goals for his own body. This may cause him to experience shame about his body, and be at risk of unhealthy behaviours to try to meet the ideals from popular culture.

Research shows that parents and educators have the ability to increase the body confidence of young people. Adults can help pupils become aware of the factors that negatively affect their self-image. Adults can also encourage healthy behaviours that have been proven to increase body confidence. Pupils can be healthier when they are aware of emotional and physical changes that occur during development. Pupils have more body confidence when they can accept their changing bodies. Adults can help by avoiding making comments about weight, shape and appearance.

Research suggests that body confidence increases with more supportive relationships rather than those based on competition or comparison. Regular conversations on these topics will encourage pupils to identify and connect with their peers instead of comparing themselves to each other.

This lesson will focus on teaching pupils strategies for redirecting conversations to positive topics.



³ DSEP Content Development Framework, University of West England's Center for Appearance Research, 2012

⁴ Thompson & Stice, 2001

Objectives

Pupils will:

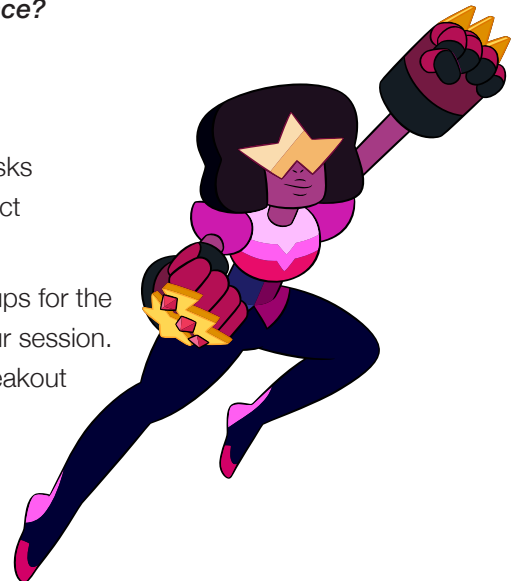
- Discuss how often body talk is present during everyday conversations.
- Identify interesting topics of conversation that do not relate to physical appearance.
- Engage in role play to practise changing the course of a conversation centred around body talk.

Essential Question

How can I navigate conversations centered around physical appearance?

Teacher Preparation

- Before the lesson, put the pupils into groups of four and arrange desks accordingly. Give out scripts 1–4 to groups evenly, printing the correct number of each script.
 - If you are teaching virtually, determine how you will assign groups for the Role Play activity. If using breakout rooms, prepare prior to your session. Platforms like Zoom allow you to pre-assign participants to breakout rooms. Google Meet will randomly distribute participants.



Suggestions for Implementing

Virtual Meetings:

- **Lighting:** Backlighting prevents your audience from seeing you clearly. Make sure that you have lighting in front of you to ensure that you are seen.
- **Camera Placement:** Try to make sure that your camera is placed at eye level. This helps to create eye contact and engagement with your audience. You can use books or other items to lift your computer (if using a laptop).
- **Sound:** Make sure that you do a quick soundcheck before beginning your session. Ensure that you can be heard and that participants will not hear an echo effect. Consider the usage of headphones equipped with a speaker.
- **Make Connections:** Remember to try to connect with your audience, which can be challenging, virtually. Connect with them using quick stories or humour.

- **Troubleshooting:** It is okay to make mistakes or have technology issues. If you have a technology issue or things don't go as planned, do your best to reconnect and move forward with your lesson. The best thing you can do is be prepared by testing your internet connection, and sound and video settings prior to your session!

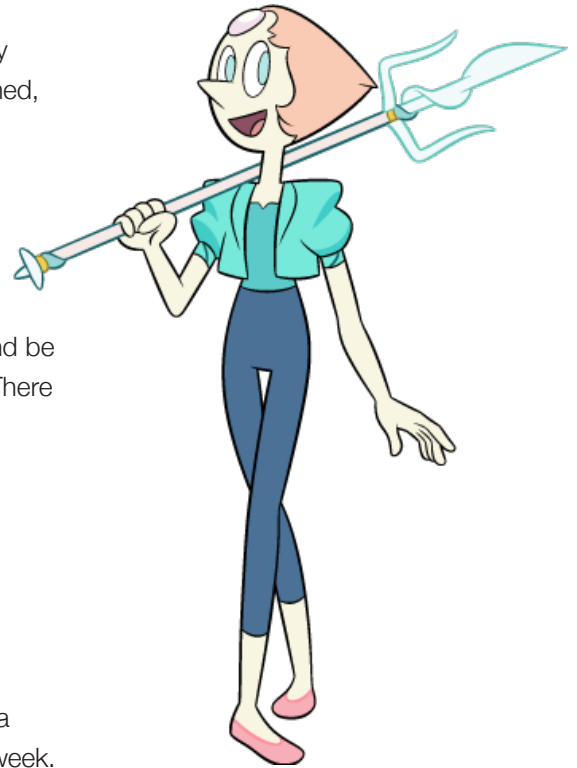
Sensitivity Note

Due to the nature of today's discussion, be aware of pupils' feelings and be sensitive to the emotions and reactions of all pupils in the classroom. There can be a diversity of emotions and reactions to these topics. Teachers should feel free to paraphrase/edit the language to suit their class.

Lesson Plan

Discuss

- Ask pupils to raise their hands, either physically or using the "raise hand" feature in the online meeting, if they've been part of a conversation about someone's physical appearance in the past week.
- Count how many pupils raise their hands and calculate the percentage of the class this represents on the board ($\# \text{ of hands raised} / \text{total} \# \text{ of pupils} \times 100$). Explain that body talk, talking about how someone looks, can be common.
- Explain that any form of body talk or body comparison can be harmful to self-image. Today, they will learn how to 'reroute a conversation' on body talk.
- Ask pupils to share examples of what it might mean to 'reroute' a conversation. Anticipated responses might include: talk about something else, say you would rather talk about something else, or walk away.
- If none of the pupils mention it, explain that one way to reroute a conversation is to 'change the subject' or talk about something else. The goal is NOT to talk about how people look. Today the class will think of things to say that are not related to body talk and practise changing the subject.
 - Example conversation topics might include: What is your favourite sport? Who do you think is the best artist in the class? What TV show do you like watching? I am worried about my maths test—who could help me?



VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

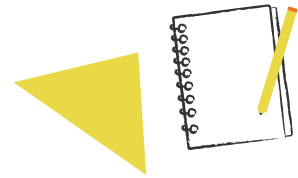
- Allow pupils to share their answers out loud or encourage them to write their answers down to refer to later, add to a live/shared document, or comment in a chat box.

Do

- Divide pupils into groups of four and give out flip chart paper to each group.
- Give the pupils around five minutes to brainstorm topics of conversation that do not revolve around bodies or appearances. Some examples include sports, school, music, family, pets, etc. Pupils should brainstorm as many ideas as they can and record them in large writing on their paper.
- Display each group's list on the classroom wall.
- Distribute one **Role Play Script** handout to each pupil, evenly distributing scripts 1–4 between the groups.
- Ask pupils to choose one of the brainstormed conversation topics and act out the script, using the topic to move the conversation away from physical appearances at the end.
- Allow ten minutes for pupils to practice their scripts before each group performs for the class.

Reflect

- Distribute one **reflection** handout to each pupil.
- Give pupils around five minutes to complete their reflection.
- If time allows, ask pupils to share the conversation topic they feel most comfortable engaging in with their peers.



VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Pupils can brainstorm independently and record on a sheet of paper or in a live/shared document.

VIRTUAL FACILITATION OPTIONS

- Use breakout rooms to put pupils into groups so they can role play.
- Give pupils a script and ask them to write about the scenario including a way to change the conversation.

Role Play Scripts



Scenario One

During lunch, four friends sit at a table talking.

PUPIL 1: Hey, why aren't you eating lunch?

PUPIL 2: I don't want to eat. I'm too fat.

PUPIL 3: My mom skips meals but she doesn't lose weight.

PUPIL 1: You can't survive without food. You have to eat.

PUPIL 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Two

A group of friends are talking before school.

PUPIL 1: I hate my legs! I can't run fast.

PUPIL 2: Well, I hate my arms, they are super weak.

PUPIL 3: I like my elbows; they are double jointed. Watch!

PUPIL 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Role Play Scripts



Scenario Three

PUPIL 1 (talking to Pupil 2): Cool shoes!

PUPIL 2: Thanks, they are comfy too.

PUPIL 3: Maybe now you'll run faster.

PUPIL 2: Nope, my legs are just too slow.

PUPIL 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Four

PUPIL 1: Did you cut your hair?

PUPIL 2: Yeah, I hate my hair.

PUPIL 3: Wow, its short.

PUPIL 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Scenario Five

PUPIL 1: There's Pupil X. They are so weird.

PUPIL 2: Pupil X just looks weird. It's their clothes.

PUPIL 3: That's Pupil X just being Pupil X.

PUPIL 4: (Choose a way to change the conversation!)

Write what you learned today:

How will you practice what you learned today? Which strategy will you choose to practice? Why? Was it awkward to try to change the conversation? Why can it be awkward? How can you deal with it when it feels awkward, but you need to change it?



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Curriculum Links

England

PSHE

Health and Wellbeing

Ourselves, growing and changing

- **H27.** To recognise their individuality and personal qualities
- **H28.** To identify personal strengths, skills, achievements and interests and how these contribute to a sense of self-worth
- **H29.** To know about how to manage setbacks/perceived failures, including how to re-frame unhelpful thinking

Relationships

Respecting self and others

- **R30.** To know that personal behaviour can affect other people; to recognise and model respectful behaviour online
- **R31.** To recognise the importance of self-respect and how this can affect their thoughts and feelings about themselves; that everyone, including them, should expect to be treated politely and with respect by others (including when online and/or anonymous) in school and in wider society; strategies to improve or support courteous, respectful relationships
- **R32.** To know about respecting the differences and similarities between people and recognising what they have in common with others e.g. physically, in personality or background

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education

Relationships Education

Respectful Relationships

- To know the importance of respecting others, even when they are very different from them (for example, physically, in character, personality or backgrounds), or make different choices or have different preferences or beliefs
- To know the importance of self-respect and how this links to their own happiness

Being Safe

- To know how to recognise and talk about their emotions, including having a varied vocabulary of words to use when talking about their own and others' feelings

Physical health and mental wellbeing

Mental Wellbeing

- To know that bullying (including cyberbullying) has a negative and often lasting impact on mental wellbeing

Internet Safety and Harms

- To know that the internet can also be a negative place where online abuse, trolling, bullying and harassment can take place, which can have a negative impact on mental health.

Curriculum Links

English
Spoken language - To maintain attention and participate actively in collaborative conversations, staying on topic and initiating and responding to comments - To use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas - To participate in discussions and debates
Citizenship
1.a To talk and write about their opinions, and explain their views, on issues that affect themselves and society 1.b To recognise their worth as individuals by identifying positive things about themselves and their achievements, seeing their mistakes, making amends and setting personal goals 1.d To recognise, as they approach puberty, how people's emotions change at that time and how to deal with their feelings towards themselves, their family and others in a positive way 3.a To know what affects mental health, and how to make informed choices 4.a To know that their actions affect themselves and others, to care about other people's feelings and to try to see things from their points of view
Scotland
Health and Wellbeing
2-01a I am aware of and able to express my feelings and am developing the ability to talk about them 2-02a I know that we all experience a variety of thoughts and emotions that affect how we feel and behave and I am learning ways of managing them
Literacy Across Learning
2-08a To help me develop an informed view, I can distinguish fact from opinion, and I am learning to recognise when my sources try to influence me and how useful these are
Wales
Health and Well-being (Progression Step 3)
Developing physical health and well-being has lifelong benefits I can explain the way in which physical and emotional changes are connected in different contexts, and I can monitor, review and adapt my behaviour to support my physical and emotional health, setting myself relevant targets

Curriculum Links

How we process and respond to our experiences affects our mental health and emotional well-being

- I can recognise the benefits of being able to focus attention on my perceptions and thoughts and know that I am developing my self-awareness
- I can see the benefits of communicating about feelings as one of a range of strategies which can help promote positive mental health and emotional well-being

Our decision-making impacts on the quality of our lives and the lives of others

- I can reflect on the way that past events and experiences have affected my thoughts, feelings and actions
- I can anticipate how future events may make me and others feel
- I can make considered decisions, taking into account available information, including past experiences

How we engage with social influences shapes who we are and affects our health and well-being

- I have developed an understanding that my values, attitudes and identity are shaped by different groups and influences

Languages, Literacy and Communication

Expressing ourselves through languages is key to communication

- I can respond to others' points of view, seeking clarity, structuring arguments, summarising and explaining what I have heard, read or seen
- I can interact with others, talking and writing about my thoughts, feelings and opinions showing empathy and respect

Northern Ireland

Personal Development and Mutual Understanding

Self-Awareness

- To develop self-awareness, self-respect and self-esteem
- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

Feelings and emotions

- To examine and explore their own and others' feelings and emotions
- To know how to recognise, express and manage feelings in a positive and safe way

Relationships

- To explore and examine what influences their views, feelings and behaviour

Language and Literacy

Talking and Listening

- To participate in group and class discussions for a variety of curricular purposes
- To share, respond to and evaluate ideas, arguments and points of view and use evidence or reason to justify opinions, actions or proposals
- To describe and talk about real experiences and imaginary situations and about people, places, events and artefacts